

VZCZCXYZ0029
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUB #3740/01 1861450
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 051450Z JUL 06
FM USINT HAVANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0957
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES
RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 013740

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE DEPT FOR WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/05/2016
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: CUBA HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDUP: JULY 5, 2006

Classified By: COM Michael Parmly for Reason 1.4(d).

11. (C) Summary: The number of documented political prisoners in Cuba dropped by four percentage points over the past six months, as the Cuban Government stepped up its use of less-scrutinized forms of control, including warnings, beatings and "acts of repudiation." Government-directed thugs held one such act June 27 aimed at Julia Cecilia Delgado of the Cuban Liberal Party. The GOC opened retail stores in front of the home of freed 75er Felix Bonne, to encourage neighbors' participation in acts of repudiation against him, but to date people have only shopped. Martha Beatriz Roque met with two visiting Uruguayan senators. Oswaldo Paya rejected the Russian and Chinese transition models, criticized "savage capitalism," and wished U.S. students would rally in support of Cuba's political prisoners. State Security agents harassed the wife of dissident doctor Darsi Ferrer. Some 20 dissidents took part in a USINT-arranged videoconference June 29 with former CIA analyst Brian Latell. End Summary.

12. (C) Over the past six months, the number of documented political prisoners in Cuba fell from 333 to 316, according to a not-yet-released report by Elizardo Sanchez's Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation. (Note: Another, less-credible source reports that 346 political prisoners are currently held. End Note.) Sanchez said the fact that the GOC has lowered the number of political prisoners for the first time in at least three years reflects the GOC's desire to bolster its international image. He said the GOC is using other harsh tactics to keep dissidents in line, including more "acts of repudiation," beatings, warnings, interrogations and convictions for "dangerousness."

GOON SQUAD COMES CALLING

13. (C) On June 27, USINT received a heads-up call stating that an act of repudiation was underway, aimed at Julia Cecilia Delgado of the outlawed Cuban Liberal Party. Poloff and visiting GAO inspectors drove there; when we approached, two thuggish Communist militants hurried to the home's doorway, blocking access. One wrote down our license plate number. Six other thugs quickly arrived, and we drove away to another planned meeting. Later, Delgado and other dissidents reported that the militants had entered the home and threatened her.

BONNE AND ROQUE

14. (C) Felix Bonne of the Assembly to Promote Civil Society (APSC), one of the 75 activists jailed in March 2003 (and

subsequently freed on health grounds), told us June 29 that the GOC has failed to turn neighbors against him. Bonne, whose backyard hosted a major dissident gathering in May 2005, said the GOC recently set up four shops in front of his house. He said the sandwich kiosk, vegetable stand, second-hand clothing store and tobacco outlet are aimed at attracting neighbors to "acts of repudiation" targeting Bonne. He chuckled and explained, "My neighbors hate the Communists, so what they do is come and buy some cigarettes or whatever but don't take part in the act of repudiation." APSC leader Martha Beatriz Roque told us that on June 27, she received a visit at home by two Uruguayan senators looking into Cuba's human rights situation. Roque did not identify them but said they left the island with a clear understanding of what Cuban dissidents are up against.

PAYA REJECTS RUSSIAN, CHINESE MODELS

15. (C) Oswaldo Paya of the Christian Liberation Movement (MCL) and his lieutenant, Minervo Shil, met with us at length on June 27. They said they had witnessed part of the act of repudiation against Delgado, and confirmed that some of the participants were State Security agents. On another front, Paya said the Russian and Chinese transition models would not work for Cuba. "We want to avoid the Russian model, in which the property was turned over to the nomenclature, which became the new mafia," he said. "The Chinese changed their system and may have opened a bunch of markets for the Chinese hierarchy, but the Chinese are still slaves." Paya also criticized what he called "savage capitalism," and said a future, democratic GOC will have to institutionalize such rights as universal medical care and the prevention of post-Castro housing evictions. "We don't want people to go to a clinic and hear, 'Sorry, you have no money and we've been privatized'."

FOREIGN SUPPORT CRUCIAL

16. (C) Paya said resolutions passed in the U.S. Congress and European Parliament calling for the liberation of Cuba's political prisoners are needed. "But what would be even more profound, exponentially more important, would be a million university students saying the same thing at a rally on the streets of Washington," he said. Paya complained that many journalists are criticizing his organization's "Program for All Cubans" document - a plan for a peaceful transition to democracy - "not because of its content, but because of its existence." He said that because critics were unable to find fault with the Program, they were attacking its creators.

DISSIDENT'S WIFE HARASSED

17. (C) Two State Security agents paid a June 23 visit to the home of dissident doctor Darsi Ferrer and when they found he was not home, they asked his wife, Yusnaimy Jorge, whether she would prefer to be questioned at a hotel. Jorge, sensing a sexual undercurrent to the question, told them she would leave with them for questioning only when they produced an official citation. The agents eventually left, but on June 28, Ferrer was summoned to court, where he was threatened with imprisonment.

LATELL VIDEOCONFERENCE WELL RECEIVED

18. (C) Some 20 dissidents, including four freed 75ers, joined dozens of diplomats and journalists at a USINT-arranged videoconference June 29 with former CIA analyst Brian Latell, author of a book on the Cuban leadership. Afterwards, the dissidents noted that frank discussion on Fidel and Raul Castro is taboo in all other settings, and said they found the event fascinating. Some of the post-event chatter focused on Raul's succession prospects, and whether his perceived pragmatism signals the potential opening of a space for state-led entrepreneurship in Cuba.

FARINAS HUNGER STRIKE CONTINUES

19. (C) Dissident journalist Guillermo Farinas stretched his hunger strike to Day 155 on July 5. He continued to receive intravenous fluids at a Santa Clara hospital and to demand Internet access. The GOC maintained tight restrictions on his telephone and visitation rights. The Italian Political Counselor told us that state telecom ETECSA, an Italian joint venture, approached Farinas with an offer to equip his home with connectivity, but that Farinas turned it down, saying his hunger strike was for open access for the public, not just himself. Farinas' girlfriend, Noelia Pedraza, told us that Farinas was planning to intensify his hunger strike by rejecting any IV fluid that contains protein, but this could not be confirmed.

PARMLY